



ONE day while Yolette and the yellow-haired youth were hunting about for an interesting story, they saw coming toward them a man with such a very doleful face that it made one quite sad to look at him.

"Poor fellow! How melancholy he seems!" whispered the Third Son, pityingly.

"Yes, he does, indeed. Perhaps that is because he has been reading some sorrowful story," suggested the Princess.

At this moment the stranger spoke to them.

"Excuse me," said he, "but I see you are tourists. Have you met any one who looked as if he had been kidnapped?"

"No, we have not," replied the Third Son. "Why do you ask such a singular question?"

"Alas!" the other returned, with a deep sigh, and gazing earnestly at the Third Son, "it is because I am very anxious to find a missing person and undo the mischief I once did him. A certain wicked nobleman, to serve his own bad ends, came to me one day and induced me to kidnap the little Prince Zeramo,

only son of the King of the Cloud-capped Mountains. Much against my will, I stole into the royal palace one night and brought away the child, whom I carried into a dark wood and placed in the top of a tall tree. The wicked nobleman, who had taken this heartless means of gratifying some spite against the king, expected that the child would soon become food for the eagles—"

"Dear me!" exclaimed the Third Son, very much shocked; "and was such the case?"

"That I know not," replied the Conscience-stricken Kidnapper, wiping his eyes with his sleeve; "for all the while my poor conscience troubled me so much that I scarcely knew what I was doing. Then, soon after the dreadful deed, I wandered away from home in a fit of depression, and I have been going about a prey to remorse ever since. Well, I suppose you are very sorry for me,—you look so, at least,—but that alone will do me no good; so if you cannot inform me of the whereabouts of Prince Zeramo I will go my way. May you

always be as happy as I am wretched." With which wish the Conscience-stricken Kidnapper, much to their relief, walked away and left them to continue their explorations and to read upon the pavement of the city the following story:

THE TALE OF THE DISCONTENTED WEATHERCOCK.

A VERY long time ago there was a Weathercock that had been set upon the lofty spire of a church on the top of a hill, so that it could be seen round about the country for many miles. One would think the Weathercock might have been very proud and happy to be up there so high, in full view of everybody, and where it was looked at a hundred times a day by those who wished to know which way the wind blew. But this was not so: the Weathercock was very discontented. It was filled with envy toward its own Shadow, which it saw go moving off every day for a journey over the country, while it was forced to stay in one place, and get very dizzy sometimes, turning on its rod at the caprice of the wind, while, meantime, it believed that its Shadow was away enjoying itself.

When the Weathercock awoke in the morning it would often see its Shadow gliding away, although the sun itself had been up scarcely five minutes. How early, then, must the Shadow have risen!

One day, in a fit of more than usual restlessness and discontent, the Weathercock resolved that if it could not travel as its Shadow did, at least it might get its Shadow to tell what it saw of interest during its journeyings. So, as the Shadow was not within speaking-distance just then, the Weathercock sent a swallow to ask it to come home for a little while. When the swallow came upon the Shadow basking contentedly in the sun, it said: "Shadow! Shadow! go home at once; the Weathercock wants to be amused."

But the Shadow replied: "Tell the Weathercock I will be there to-morrow noon."

When the swallow flew back with this message the Weathercock grumbled a good deal, but it was forced to be satisfied and wait until the time set by the Shadow. However, when midday drew near and the Shadow began its

return, the sun became so hot that the Weathercock got very drowsy, and fell asleep.

By and by, after a long nap, it awoke with a start—for the wind had risen suddenly—to find that the Shadow had gone away, to come back no more that day. And so it was every noon for some time after.

One day, when the sun was covered with clouds and it was not so warm as usual, the Weathercock made an effort and really succeeded in keeping its eyes open until noon had come. But it was to no purpose: the Shadow did not appear at all that day. On the following day the Weathercock had better luck; for the Shadow came, although it looked so pale that the Weathercock felt quite alarmed.

"Are you ill, Shadow?" it inquired.

"Indeed, I am not feeling very strong to-day," replied the Shadow, faintly. "It seems as if I might go off in a swoon any moment."

While the Weathercock was trying to think what to say, the Shadow gasped out:

"Oh! dear! *oh!* dear! I am going now," and just then, a cloud crossing the sun, it faded and faded until it had quite vanished.

The Weathercock was frightened at this disappearance, especially when several days went by without its coming or showing any sign of life. The Weathercock grew very despondent there alone during this time, the more so because it rained hard for nearly a week. It never had felt much affection for the Shadow, but now that the Shadow was lost, it mourned greatly its former companion.

At last one night the rain ceased, the wind chased the clouds from the sky, and at about midnight the Weathercock awoke out of a sound sleep to find that the moon was shining brightly. Moreover, it saw lying near the edge of the roof something dark that looked very much like the lost Shadow. After staring a moment at this appearance, scarcely able to believe its eyes, the Weathercock asked in a voice that trembled slightly:

"Is that you, Shadow?"

"Truly, it is myself," the Shadow replied very coolly.

"And where have you been all these days? As you seem to have a little leisure, will you not tell me something of your travels? A

great traveler like yourself ought to have much of interest to relate, surely."

"Yes, I have seen some strange things in my day," the Shadow admitted; "but I cannot talk about them very much now, for I must soon be off and away. I am very restless."

there was a certain little drop of oil which said to itself:

"Alas! what can such an ugly thing as I, who dwell beside a slimy pool in a bog, do to make myself beautiful? When the king brings home his new queen, and everything else in the



THE QUEEN STOPS THE CARRIAGE TO LOOK AT THE DROP OF OIL ON THE WATER.

"It seems to me you are always in a hurry," complained the Weathercock; "but at least tell me, what land did you visit last?"

"The land where fire is hot, where cows walk on all fours, and where the houses are built out of doors. The king of that country has been away to be married. I will relate an incident of his wedding journey. When the king's return home with his bride was expected, everybody and everything in the kingdom wanted to look as well as possible. Now,

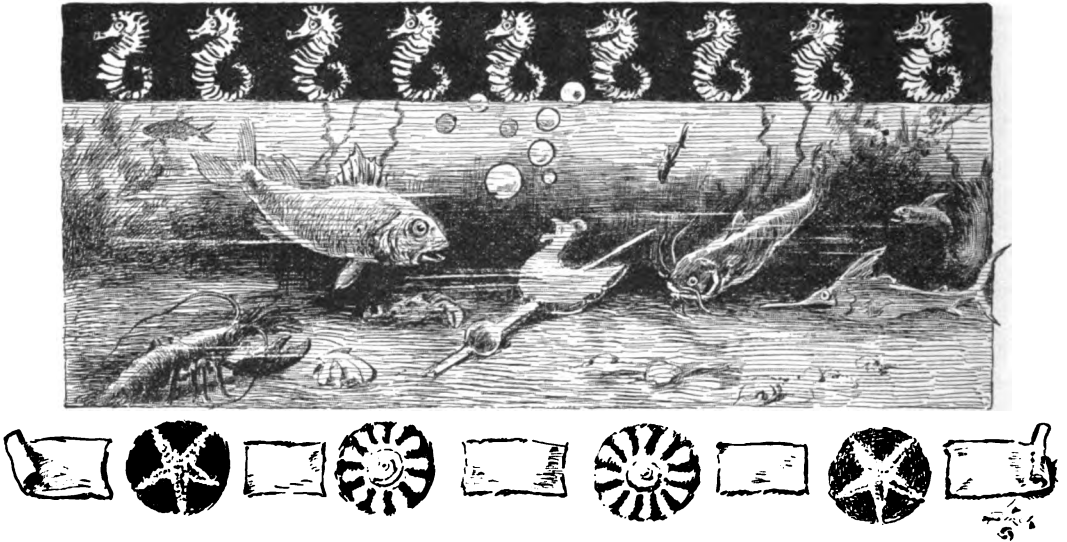
country is looking its prettiest, I shall feel very gloomy to think that among them all I alone remain as ugly as before. And it hurts me to be gloomy; I would rather die than do it. I think I will drown myself in the slimy pool.'

"So the little drop of oil slid despairingly down a bulrush-stock, and tried to drown itself in the dirty water. But instead of sinking to the bottom, as it had thought to do, it spread itself out very thin — oh! very thin indeed — over the surface of the slimy pool. And when the king rode by with his queen, the sun shone upon the oil as it lay in a film on top of the water, so that it reflected all the colors of the rainbow. When the young queen saw this she clapped her hands in delight, and declared it was the most beautiful thing in the entire kingdom —"

Here the Shadow interrupted itself, and,

exclaiming that it must go, it edged off the roof and disappeared.

The Weathercock was much vexed at having its conversation with the Shadow thus broken into; and from that hour it grew even more anxious than before to get away from its church spire and out into the world, where it could see something for itself. In fact, it became so restless and fidgeted about so busily that it got very rickety, and one day when a hurricane arose it was wrenched from its place and blown far, far out to sea, where it was drowned. And the Shadow that had traveled never was seen afterward.



As Yolette and the Third Son emerged from the Street of the Discontented Weathercock they came upon the Tower Clock sitting on a ledge with his back against a wall, swinging his long legs to and fro.

"I hope, Princess," the Tower Clock said to Yolette, as they approached, "that you are now fully satisfied, and that it would be just as well to move on toward home."

"I am quite ready," replied Yolette, "for I do want to see my father; and, besides, I ought to go back — I mean forward — and finish the letter I began to dear grandmama. I am sure I shall have enough to write about now."

The Tower Clock immediately raised her to his shoulder, and started off at a rapid pace.

"Stop!" cried Yolette, suddenly bethinking herself of her comrade; "we must n't leave the Third Son behind us."

"We can't, for he is before us," retorted the Tower Clock. "I see him just ahead, and I will pick him up presently."

As soon as the Third Son had been lifted to his former place on the Tower Clock's left shoulder, the Tower Clock advanced with rapid strides, as if anxious to make up for lost time. Soon he came to a gate in the outer walls of

the city, whereon hung a placard on which was to be read the word "Finis."

A few moments later Yolette, turning her head, took her last look at the famous City of Stories.

During the homeward journey, which did not take very long,—for the Tower Clock's steps were enormous, and he rested neither day nor night,—it was noticeable that the Third Son was melancholy. At last Yolette asked him to tell her what made him so sad.

"Alas!" he replied, "I am the most unhappy youth alive! I, who am a third son, and who ere this should have done many great and glorious deeds, have been wandering about for more than five years to no purpose whatever. I have not so much as heard of a giant, or a dragon, or a sea-monster, or an enchanted castle—except in made-up stories; I have met with no perils, I have undergone no misfortune, except, indeed, that of having none to undergo. I might as well not be a third son."

"Perhaps when we get home my father may be able to give you some great deed to do," suggested the Princess by way of consolation. "To be sure, giants and dragons do not grow in our kingdom, but one might stray over the borders. And then there is always a chance of war, you know."

And so they journeyed on, and by and by they reached Yolette's father's kingdom, and, soon afterward entered the capital.

Of course the king was overjoyed at the sight of his daughter, whom he had long given up for lost; and he resolved to give a brilliant fête. Accordingly, he sent out invitations at once.

Kings and princes and nobles, besides a host of common people, crowded into the city to enjoy the royal hospitality. Among other guests was the King of the Cloud-capped Mountains. There also came to the festivities the Conscience-stricken Kidnapper. Yolette was astonished that this man should have been able to travel so long a distance in so short a time.

"Oh, that is easily explained," he replied, when she questioned him about it. "You see, I made a short cut. Just after we parted, in the City of Stories, I heard that the person I am looking for could be found here to-day."

Here the Conscience-stricken Kidnapper interrupted his story with a loud sob. On being asked the cause of his emotion, he said in a tearful voice:

"Pardon me for having disturbed your Majesty, but I was suddenly seized by a sharp and cruel pang. They proceed from remorse—remorse that has been with me these many long years. It was I who stole the little Prince Zeramo, only son of the King of the Cloud-capped Mountains, and this youth is no other than he—the formerly lost Prince Zeramo!"

"Prince Zeramo!" echoed the King of the Cloud-capped Mountains, in great agitation. "Prince Zeramo, you say?" Then, after earnestly regarding the yellow-haired youth a few moments, he cried joyfully: "Yes; it is he, indeed! My son, my son!"

"Ah, what a load is lifted from my mind!" exclaimed the newly found prince, when he had embraced his royal parent with much fervor. "Now I know why I never could succeed in doing anything heroic. It is because I am not really a third son, after all!"

As may be supposed, the joyous event of Zeramo's recovery caused the festivities to go on even more gaily than before.

As a fitting close for the fête, which lasted three weeks instead of one, it was arranged to give up the last three days to a wedding; and whose wedding should it be if not that of the Prince Zeramo and the Princess Yolette?

The happy pair were united with all pomp and splendor, and after the other ceremonies were concluded there was a magnificent ball.

The Tower Clock did not appear at the revels, for he had mounted straightway to his old place on the tower, and settled down to his regular work.

THE END.